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VOLUME 107 NUMBER 19502 FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 1997 • ADAR II 5, 5757 • 6 THU AL-QADAH 1417 NIS 7.00 (Eilat NIS 6.00)

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## Jordanian soldier kills 7 schoolgirls



**Hussein: I'd love to visit the bereaved families**  
By DAVID RUDGE and DAVID MAKOVSKY

Seven schoolgirls were killed and five pupils and a teacher wounded when a crazed Jordanian soldier shot them in cold blood, as they toured the Jordanian-controlled Naharayim enclave in the Jordan Valley yesterday.



Beit Shemesh residents welcome home their daughter at the AMIT Fuerst school last night, after she returned from Naharayim. (Gali Cahalo, reproduction by Flash 90, courtesy of 'Me'ariv'; Brian Hendler)

**Weizman pushes for new peace efforts**  
By BATSHEVA TSUR

President Ezer Weizman, mediating between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Arab leaders yesterday, called for redoubled efforts to move the peace process forward following the massacre in Naharayim.

At a press conference in Amman last night after returning from Spain, Hussein said, "I would love to visit the families of the bereaved." He termed the tragedy "a slur on all of us," adding, "it's not political, it's a vile crime."

reburied home immediately after the shooting. Jordanian Prime Minister Abdel-Karim Kabariti had a stiff conversation with Netanyahu yesterday, as he offered condolences. Kabariti also called President Ezer Weizman.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who is currently in the US, also sent a condolence letter to the prime minister. US President Bill Clinton also called.

written a harsh letter to Netanyahu, questioning the prime minister's commitment to peace, and some cabinet ministers charged that yesterday's attack could not be completely divorced from the

monarch's earlier comments to the  
Continued on Page 4

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# Peled: Naharayim off-limits to school trips

By ARYEH DEAN COHEN

The eighth-graders from Beit Shemesh's Finest School who came under attack at Naharayim were not supposed to be at that site, which is in any case off-limits to school trips, Deputy Education Minister Moshe Peled said yesterday.

Peled, who is responsible for the ministry's handling of school trips, told Israel Radio that while he did not want to make any accusations as the matter was still under initial investigation, "schools or [other institutions] in the entire Education Ministry system are not permitted to enter the island at Naharayim at present."

Peled said: "Private individuals can go there, but schools are strictly forbidden from doing so. This school was supposed to be someplace else completely - based on the route approved by the Education Ministry's school trip coordination unit, it was supposed to be on Mt. Arbel and at Kfar Hittim and not at Naharayim... Somebody took it upon themselves to change the route, and apparently this has happened other times."

Asked why the site was off-limits, Peled explained: "The Education Ministry requires an armed adult chaperone for each 15 pupils on such a trip. Since according to the peace agreements between Israel and Jordan, we cannot bring more than four weapons on to the island at Naharayim, the Education Ministry does not permit schools to go there, because this violates the criteria of our trips. There is a complete ban on going to the island at Naharayim."

According to regulations, trip routes must be coordinated with special school trip coordination offices staffed by representatives of the Society for the Preservation of Nature and the ministry, who check safety and security requirements.

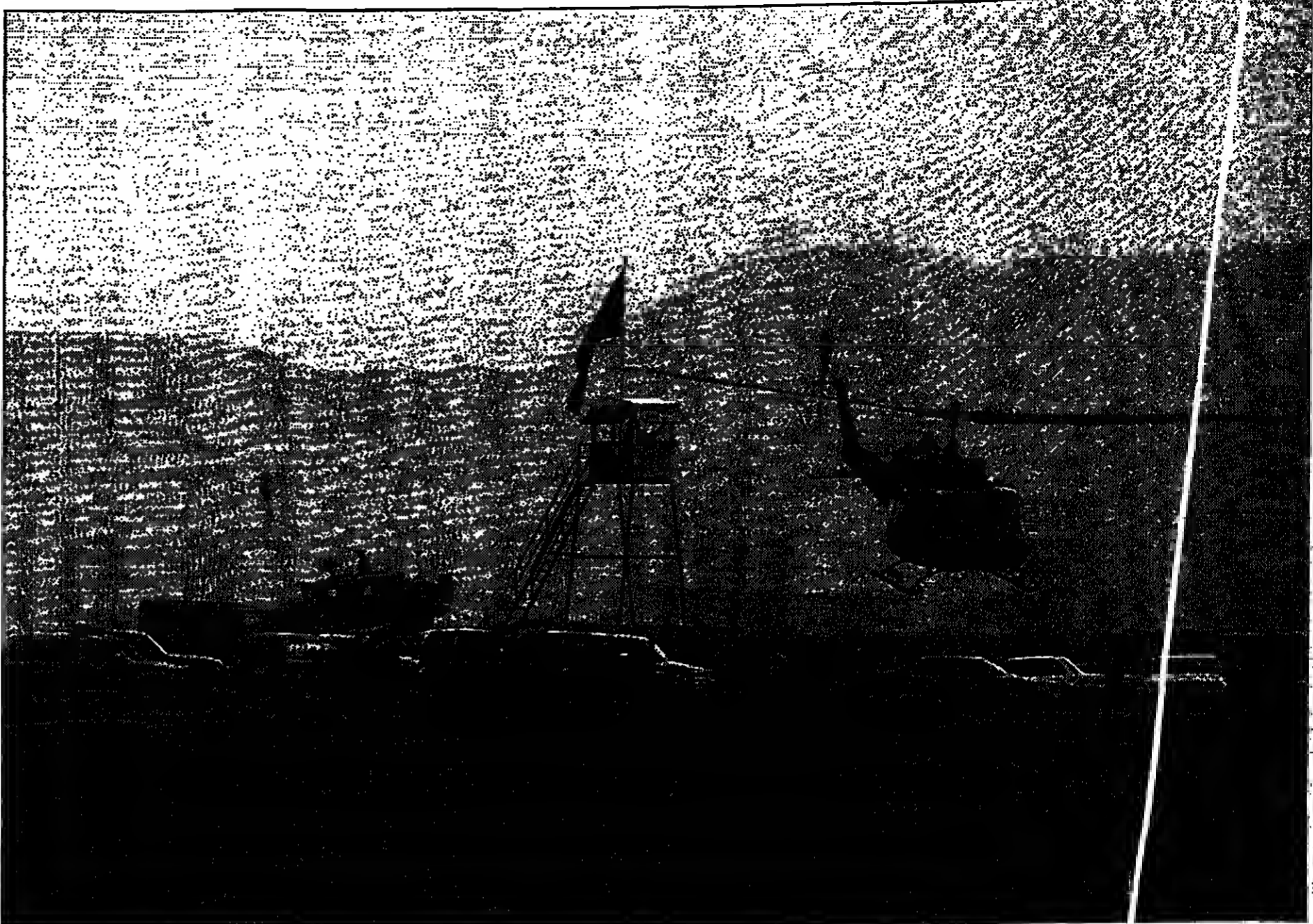
Education Minister Zevulun Hammer said although the ministry

"has not yet checked into what was included in the permit," he understood one could not visit such sites without a permit. "But this has nothing to do with it," he said. "Jordanian children can visit on our side of the border in complete safety, and Israeli children are killed on a peaceful border with our closest friend among our neighbors - this is something that never should have happened. The matter of whether schools are allowed to visit there will naturally be looked into, but at this moment, when the bodies are still before us, and the murder is so awful - it wasn't a disturbed soldier, but there is something disturbingly wrong with the peace."

I feel the pain of the families and know we will have to get to the bottom of the matter, and after the funerals we'll talk about it... one must not visit beyond the border of where you have a permit to visit, and I don't know to what degree these things were coordinated."

Asked whether the current political tension contributed to the attack, Hammer said: "No misunderstanding between Israel and Jordan... justifies a soldier firing on Israelis. I don't even understand how you can suggest such a thing. There was no provocation here, we're talking about young girls who came to visit a place that is usually peaceful. Many visit there - again, the matter of whether schools are allowed to visit there shall and will be checked - but this is a border that once was in Israeli hands. True, today it belongs to [Jordan] and these things must be coordinated, but to kill someone? For what?"

Hammer added: "It seems to me that the peace people talk about hasn't been internalized enough, they talk about the era of peace, but it hasn't come yet. We constantly have to be aware of the fragility of the matter, and be careful, but this doesn't mean that from now on, we always have to walk on tippy-toes so that no one kills you for no good reason."



An Israeli helicopter leaves the scene of the attack at Naharayim on the Jordanian side of the border yesterday.

## Shooting site was touted 'Island of Peace' Tens of thousands of Israelis visited area

By HERB KENON

Jordan's King Hussein, in a June 1995 meeting at Nabarayim with Yitzhak Rabin and Helmut Kohl, said that "No place better illustrates the fact that we are at peace" than Naharayim.

Until yesterday, indeed, the oft-visited island

where the Yarmuk and Jordan rivers meet the Jordan, has - until now - been a symbol of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel. A sign at the entrance to the island, located 10 kilometers south of the Kinneret, reads "Island of Peace."

Under the 1994 accord, the Hashemite kingdom regained sovereignty over the area, but Israel leased the land for 25 years, with an option to renew. Kibbutz Ashdot Ya'acov Meuhad and Kibbutz Ashdot Ya'acov Ihud, which have fields and orchards on the island, continue to cultivate them.

The peace treaty stipulates that although Jordan has complete control of the island, Israelis can enter the area, for a fee, without visas or passports. Entrance is through a Jordanian checkpoint.

Tens of thousands of Israelis have taken advantage of this as a way to "go to Jordan" for a few hours. In addition, thousands of Palestinians and Israeli Arabs go there on the weekends to meet relatives from Jordan, and even some who filter down from Syria.

At the end of the day, everyone goes back home: The site is not a transit point between Israel and Jordan.

It is reported yesterday that in recent weeks the Jordanian author-

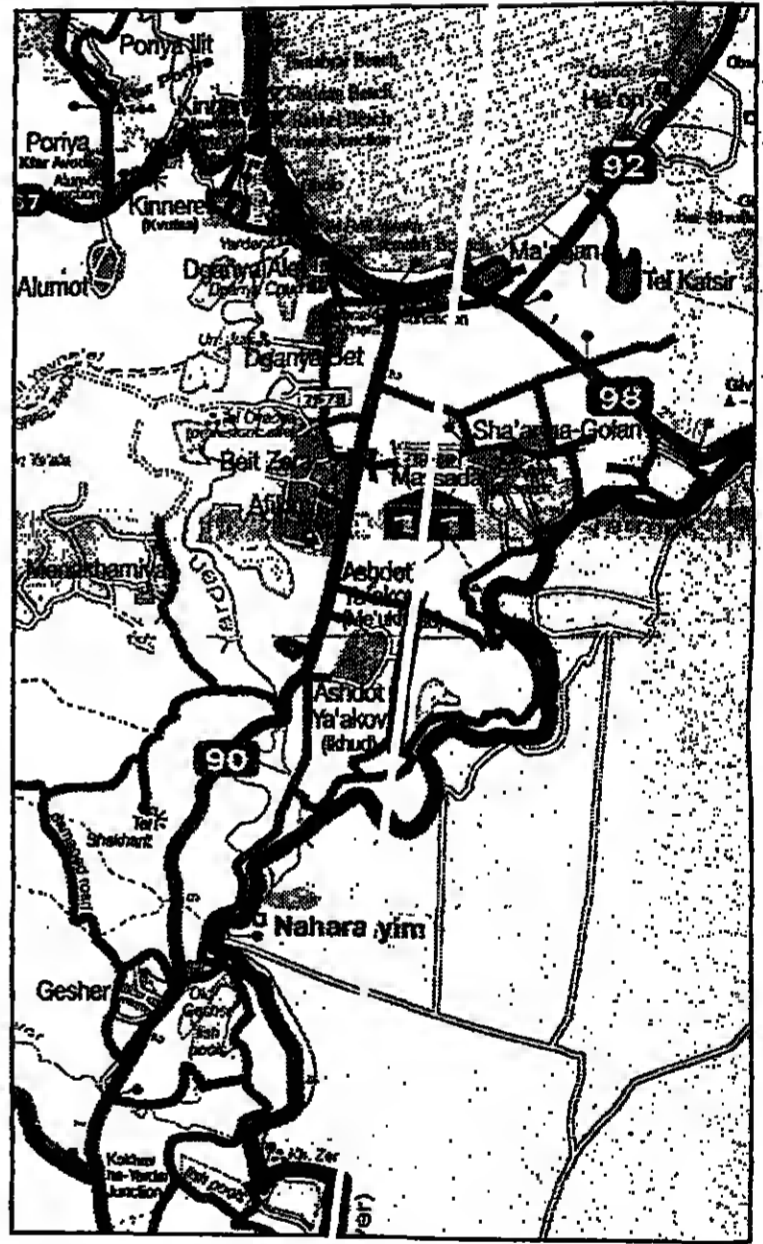
ities alerted Israeli to the possibility that some of the Arab family meetings were more than just picnics, but a means to smuggle arms and even terrorists across the border.

A handful of Jordanian guardposts dot the island. Under the terms of the accord, the IDF and Israel Police are not allowed into the area.

Although the site has turned into a busy tourist attraction, the Education Ministry has forbidden visits there because it is not under IDF control. One of the questions that will have to be answered is why the Beit Shemesh school group was in the area.

In 1925, Pinhas Rutenberg, an engineer who immigrated from Russia, received a concession from the mandatory government to use 6,000 dunams at the junction of the Yarmuk and Jordan rivers for 70 years. He built there the first of a series of dams and power stations that eventually brought electricity to the Yishuv.

At the time, the project, located inside the boundaries of what was then Transjordan, was considered an example of cooperation between Jews and Arabs. The power plant was destroyed by Iraqi troops during the first days of the War of Independence.



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The 10 of spades, the nine of hearts, the queen of diamonds and the 10 of clubs.

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Those holding tickets numbered 692763, 161538, 247781, 340532, 467952, 685440, 025696 and 743643 all won NIS 5,000.

Those holding tickets ending in 89733, 03895, 07833, 05163, 32582, 69092, 13255, 55719, 15096, 97795, 72131, 18401, 37459, 13491, 24391, 81311, 09979, 26853 and 16433 all won NIS 1,000.

Tickets ending in 445, 319, 157 and 641 all won NIS 100; in 45, 44, 77 and 18, NIS 30; in 77 and 57, NIS 20; and in 7 and 3, NIS 10.

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מרכז מידע

# In Beit Shemesh, the wait for names

By ELI WOHLGELERITER

They stood in pairs, they sat alone: students crying on each other's shoulders, parents huddling with their cigarettes.

At the AMIT Fuerst school in Beit Shemesh yesterday afternoon, the tension of waiting to hear who was killed and who escaped death grew as the day wore on. "I just want them to tell me who's dead and who's been wounded," a father suddenly screamed out.

But for hours there was no official news, no information to share with the hundreds of frantic students and parents who milled around in the courtyard outside the building, and inside the hallway near the principal's office.

Names, they wanted to hear the names.

It began at the school at 11:55 a.m. when 12th-grader Inbal Fadida was about to go to her next class. Her cellular phone rang, a call from one of the girls on the

trip. "She was crying," said Fadida. "She said they had been shot at by the Jordanian border. I asked her if anyone was dead, but she said she didn't know because they wouldn't let her close enough to see.

"At first I didn't believe her, but when I heard her crying, I believed it."

Fadida rushed to the teachers' room to relate what she had heard, and the teachers told the principal. The boys in the school, a state-religious school of some 1,100 students in grades seven through 12,

were told over the loudspeaker to go to the school's synagogue to say Psalms.

Classes were suspended for the rest of the day, and psychologists and social workers were brought in to tend to the more distraught parents and pupils. Now and again someone collapsed from the anxiety and tension, and medics from Magen David Adom lifted them onto stretchers and offered aid.

One 12th-grade classroom was set up as a makeshift first-aid room. On the wall were newspaper clippings from a previous tragedy:

Pictures of the 73 soldiers who were killed in last month's helicopter crash. The clippings were quickly taken down.

Down the hall in another classroom, students sat in front of a television, watching the news bulletins.

For everyone, shock and disbelief was the overwhelming reaction; the lack of names just made it worse.

"It's a very hard situation for the parents, the tension of not knowing who has been killed," said one psychologist on duty.

For hours everyone stood around,

some making small talk, others chain smoking, many glued to the radio, everyone trying to stay calm in the face of impending bad news.

One mother grabbed the shoulders of an elderly man, both their eyes red from tears, in a "be strong" embrace. "I won't believe [she's alive] until I see her in front of me," said the man.

For the pupils, too, there was a dazed feeling.

"I'm just in shock," said Shlomo Revivo, 17. "I know some of the kids in that class, but I don't know who got killed and who got hurt,

and I'm just waiting here to find out."

Some of the eighth graders on the trip called their parents' cellular phones to tell them they were alive and OK.

This brought relief to some, but made other parents more anxious. "Ask about my daughter," screamed one mother, standing near a parent who had gotten a call from hers.

Other pupils called the school, and announcements over the loudspeakers asked those parents to come to the phone. A phone call meant good news.

Outside in the hallway, some 12th-grade boys were talking politics.

"This peace is not real, and there won't ever be peace," said 17-year-old Ehud Amitai. "The Arabs don't want peace, they want the whole country."

Some of his classmates echoed the sentiment, expressing a frustration felt by many.

Others dealt with the tension in their own way: At one table in the teachers' room, where many parents were gathered, a father sat alone, reciting Psalms, waiting to hear the names.



Inbal Fadida: At first I didn't believe what my friend was telling me, but when I heard her crying, I believed it. (Brian Handler)



Members of the Azulai family share relief at the AMIT Fuerst school yesterday afternoon after finding out that their daughter was not injured in the shooting incident. (Brian Handler)

## Recent clashes on the Israeli-Jordanian border

- April 11, 1995 - A 19-year-old Palestinian was wounded by Dead Sea Works security guards near Sdom, after he crossed the border and attempted to kidnap a worker.
- April 15, 1995 - A Jordanian was killed near Ouja, north of Jericho, while trying to infiltrate into Israel.
- May 4, 1995 - A Jordanian citizen who infiltrated into Israel near Kibboz Afikim was returned to Jordan after it was determined he had not entered Israel armed.
- June 4, 1995 - A mentally ill Jordanian man who crossed into Israel near the Dead Sea Works was returned to Jordan after a short interrogation.
- June 24, 1995 - Three Islamic Jihad activists crossed from Jordan into Israel in the Jordan Valley. Soldiers shot one dead and captured the second. The third surrendered to General Security Service agents and IDF soldiers two days later.
- August 12, 1995 - A Palestinian was apprehended near Argaman in the Jordan Valley while smuggling weapons.
- November 21, 1995 - An IDF soldier was lightly wounded in a shooting exchange with a gunman who tried to infiltrate from Jordan into Israel near Kibboz Geshet. The gunman was killed.
- June 26, 1996 - Three soldiers were killed and two lightly wounded when gunmen who had crossed into Israel from Jordan ambushed an IDF patrol east of Moshav Na'aran.
- November 2, 1996 - A man believed to be Jordanian was killed near Kfar Ruppin while trying to cross the Israeli-Jordanian border.

## 'It was like war' said dazed survivors of the attack

Fourteen-year-old Hila Ivri lay next to her twin sister in Poriya Hospital near Tiberias yesterday, and relived how a "bad guy with big eyes" shot them on a school trip to Naharayim.

Another survivor of the Jordanian soldier's attack recalled how her friend fell on her as the shots rang out.

"I screamed 'Nirit, Nirit, get up, I'm scared, get up,'" Tali Sa'ad said, after those who had escaped unscathed returned to their hometown of Beit Shemesh. "I turned her over and saw a bullet hole in her chest."

Sa'ad, her voice shaking with emotion, said her friend opened her eyes, looked at her, and died.

"All the girls screamed and cried and ran beneath bushes to hide. Many girls were hurt and bloody. I was hit in the leg," Ivri

said. Her sister was shot in the stomach.

"I saw the gunman. He held his gun. He was shooting, and then he started shooting again...He was a bad guy with big eyes," she said.

"I saw one girl who was hit in the shoulder. She rolled over the bushes and then stopped breathing."

Jordanian authorities were briefing the group's teachers when a uniformed Jordanian standing on a hill above them took aim and emptied an entire ammunition clip.

"It was like war, girls hit in the throat, in the neck, in the stomach, on their legs," said teacher Zecharya Ozeri, clutching a denim school bag he said belonged to one of the dead girls from the Fuerst school.

Another survivor, who gave

her name as Dafna, said one of the adults on the trip shouted at the girls to take cover.

"I flattened myself on the ground with my friend and said 'Shema Yisrael,' she said.

Later, dazed survivors - some of them scratched after taking cover during the shooting - hugged their parents in an emotional reunion outside the school.

"We were told school groups traveled in the area daily...it was a quiet area," said principal Moshe Ablovich. The Education Ministry said it overrode approved field trips to the site because of security concerns.

"Tomorrow will be a regular school day...and each class will meet with its teacher and a psychologist so the children can release their emotions," Ablovich told reporters. (Reuter)

**THE LOUISIANA PROCESS**

**THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE**

We, the Israeli members of the steering committee of the recently established International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace, which, in Copenhagen, brought together for the first time in the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict leading Egyptians, Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians, are greatly alarmed that, at this critical stage in our common effort to achieve a just and lasting peace between Israel and the Arab world, decisions have been taken by the Government of Israel which could endanger the whole future of the peace process.

In our Copenhagen Declaration, we stressed that "to create an atmosphere of amity for negotiations, no resort to violence or terrorism in any form should be accepted or condoned. To allay Palestinian fears, no new settlements should be built, and no Palestinian land, state or private, will be expropriated."

The decisions taken not only run counter to creating an atmosphere of amity for negotiations but they undermine the positive climate that was created after agreement was attained on the Hebron issue.

We call on the Government of Israel not to take any action that could endanger the peace process which is of such importance to us all. We call on the Palestinian Authority to take every step possible to prevent outbreaks of violence. We call on all parties to the peace process, and especially on the Prime Minister of Israel, to remain steadfastly on the course for peace, and not to take any decisions which could deflect us from that course.

The International Alliance for Arab-Israeli Peace will spare no effort to establish genuine Arab-Israeli relations based on respect for our mutual rights and the dignity and security of our peoples. Jerusalem should be the center for building mutual confidence; the decisions taken with regard to building new quarters in East Jerusalem, and especially the manner in which they were taken and their timing, have had the opposite result and therefore should not be implemented.

We will consult the other partners in the International Steering Committee about the present critical situation in the peace process.

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For the class which will open in October 1997, an information session with Associate Dean, Edmund J. Wilson, of the Kellogg School, will be held on Thursday, March 27, 1997, at 5:00 p.m. at the Graduate School of Business Administration, the Recanati Building, Tel-Aviv University. For further information and confirmation of your participation at the meeting, Call: 03-6409955, Fax: 6407803.

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**Jerusalem Post Classifieds**

# Bi-national inquiry launched over attack

By DAVID RUDGE

A joint Jordanian-Israeli inquiry was launched yesterday into the Naharayim shooting, which, in a period of minutes, turned a popular tourist site into a killing field.

The investigation will try to ascertain how an unarmed Jordanian soldier, reportedly a driver, managed to take a rifle from one of his colleagues and open fire on a group of Beit Shemesh schoolgirls. It will also have to investigate why Jordanian soldiers refused to allow Israeli soldiers and policemen enter the area to treat and evacuate the casualties.

Nearly 40 minutes - a critical period in terms of treating wounded - elapsed before emergency crews were permitted access to the site, according to initial reports.

Jordan Valley Regional Council chairman Ze'ev Shore said the delay totally contradicted the terms of the peace accord in which Naharayim was returned to Jordanian sovereignty.

"The agreement says that if there should be an incident in which Israelis are involved, the [Israeli] police are allowed to go inside," said Shore.

"What happened here is that after the shooting, the police went to the Jordanian barrier and the Jordanians stopped them. The police stood there helplessly."

"They begged to be allowed into the area. Rescue services arrived but were not allowed in. This is a clear violation of the agreement."

"This is very serious in a place, which we signed in an agreement with the Jordanians, is a place where people can visit and tour around. The Jordanians are the ones responsible for the security of the visitors and are

the ones who breached the agreement by not allowing our forces to go in," said Shore.

He stressed that what had happened was not characteristic of relations between local residents and those on the Jordanian side, which have been very good.

There were also reports that the Jordanians themselves acted quickly and helped those girls who were unhurt or lightly wounded back onto their buses while evacuating the more serious casualties to the nearest Jordanian hospital near Shuna.

Subsequent inquiries revealed that at least one MDA ambulance was admitted to the site immediately after the incident and brought out some of the wounded, along with two of those killed.

After the evacuation, the site was closed by the Jordanian authorities and was only reopened afterwards to MDA ambulances.

Boaz Norkio, head of MDA services in the North, said the crews had acted quickly and were the only rescue teams that entered the field at the beginning and once the barriers were reopened 40 minutes later.

"All I can say is that I hope this will be the last time we have to deal with a situation like this," Norkio said.

**Item adds:** School psychologists and social workers were dispatched to Kibbutz Geshar near Naharayim after the attack and began counseling pupils. The kibbutz closed its gates to journalists.

A security coordinator at the site said that the Education and Defense ministries had banned entry of anyone but kibbutz workers or members. He said a few individual parents had arrived at the kibbutz and had emotional meetings with their children.



Jordanian Crown Prince Hassan (left), visits one of the wounded girls at a hospital near Shuna.

# Jordanian town sympathetic, but blames Netanyahu for slaughter

SHUNA, Jordan (Reuters) - Residents of this northern Jordan town offered blood and sympathy for the schoolgirls who were shot by a Jordanian soldier yesterday, but blamed Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu for the attack.

"The attack should not have been against young innocent children but against Netanyahu who is stubborn and a tyrant," said Mifleh Awad, an elderly farmer sitting with other locals in a coffee shop in the center of Shuna, 75 km. north of Amman.

Hospital workers and doctors said over 20 people rushed to donate blood to the victims after Jordanian military cars took them to the local hospital here a few kilometers from where the shooting took place.

But residents said their sympathy for the victims did not diminish their fury with Netanyahu, whose plans to build Jewish housing at Har Homa has sparked widespread anger in the Arab world.

"Netanyahu's behavior has pushed this soldier to commit this act ... this was

bound to happen. Israel has been encouraging this with the building of settlements," said one youth who refused to give his name.

"The soldier is an ordinary citizen who has felt let down and was not ready to keep his emotions seeing his people [the Palestinians] there across the river being destroyed," he said.

"What can Netanyahu expect if Palestinian Arab land is usurped ... When your land is taken over, you are entitled to

resist by all means," another said.

Sheikh Yusuf Ahmed, a local leader said Israel wanted domination, not genuine peace with its neighbors.

"All the Jordanian people extended their hands for peace but the Israelis have not extended their hands fully for an honorable, just and comprehensive peace," he said, echoing widespread disappointment by ordinary Jordanians with the few gains so far from the 1994 peace treaty with Israel.

## KILLS

Continued from Page 1

premier.

Foreign Minister David Levy declared, "All verbal violence and threats of violence are immediately translated into actions, such as yesterday's killing fields ... Jordan must take stock and monitor all those who have weapons. This psychological escalation could cause more catastrophes. Who knows how many crazies who carry weapons are waiting for the 'Green Light' [as they interpret] statements made characterizing Israel as it is characterized today."

Netanyahu, in a statement yesterday, also warned that violence emerges from a climate of crisis being whipped up.

The Jordanians have launched a full inquiry into the massacre, which occurred yesterday morning while the bus of schoolgirls was visiting the enclave, which was returned to Jordanian sovereignty

under the terms of the peace accord with Israel.

The children had gotten off the bus after entering the enclave, passing through the Jordanian border post, where their ID cards were checked. One of the teachers' assistants on the tour, Ya'acov Zecharya, said that they were standing at the observation post overlooking the site of the historic Rutenberg hydroelectric plant when the massacre occurred.

A soldier, reportedly a driver named Ahmed Moussa, 26, from Adasiya, a town near the site, took a colleague's rifle and climbed the observation tower, above the site where the children were standing.

Zecharya said he saw the soldier climb down from the tower and come towards them; as he did this, he opened fire at the girls, who had their backs to him.

"We were standing there listening to the guide with our backs to the Jordanian soldiers when I saw him come down and put a magazine in his rifle and start to open

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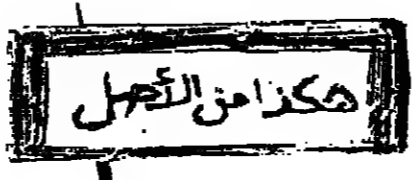
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# Israelis barred from Naharayim

By ARNOLD O'SULIVAN

Acting on orders from Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, the IDF and Israel Police have barred Israelis and tourists from entering the Naharayim enclave until the investigation into yesterday's massacre is completed.

Defense officials said it was possible that Israel would ask to renegotiate the security arrangements at Naharayim, but they added this would only be discussed following the inquiry.

Speaking at the site of the attack, Mordechai hinted it may have been instigated by the recent caustic comments by Jordanian leaders against the Israeli government.

"To my regret, verbal violence can bring about physical violence," Mordechai said. "Look how words and a harsh atmosphere can also lead to violence. What is needed now from all leaders is to do everything possible to prevent violence and prevent a process in which someone will

translate it into taking up arms and start killing and drastically harm the peace process which took so much hard work."

While Israeli leaders linked the shooting to the recent harsh criticism against Israel by Jordanians, the Jordanians expressed deep regret for the attack. Both King Hussein and Jordan's Prime Minister Abdul-Karim Kabariti telephoned Mordechai and extended their condolences.

"What can I say other than [to speak of] a sense of deep embarrassment and human anguish," said Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan during a visit to Naharayim. "I want to emphasize that justice will be served, that a full investigation will be conducted, that this investigation will be with the full knowledge of the Israeli police," Hassan added.

King Hussein spoke to Mordechai in the afternoon, but it wasn't until late last night that he telephoned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

As soon as word of the attack

reached Israel, the IDF contacted Jordanian commanders at all levels to coordinate the evacuation of those wounded who were brought to the hospital in Shuna. The action was commanded by Northern Police Commander Supt. Alec Ron and OC Central Command Maj.-Gen. Uzi Dayan, who has good relations with the Jordanians.

Dayan visited the wounded in the hospital, escorted by Prince Hassan and top Jordanian Army officers.

The attack was an embarrassment for the Jordanians and a failure that may cost them not just a setback in relations, but also a change in the character of their hold on the Naharayim enclave.

"I demanded that there be a representative of the Israel Police on the investigation team, so that we know everything that happened here in a true and accurate way, and so we can draw the right conclusions and [take] steps if needed," Mordechai said.



Margalit Badayev is comforted by a friend as she weeps at her daughter Shiri's funeral in Givat Shaul last night. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a eulogy: "If anyone thinks the murder of little girls will bring this people to its knees...break our spirit or that we will relinquish our birthright, holy land and our eternal capital, he does not know the strength that exists in each person standing here around me today and in the entire nation."

## Teacher: It was a nightmare

By DAVID RUDGE

Schoolteacher Rosa Himi yesterday described the events that brought a bloody and tragic end to the annual tour for seventh and eighth graders from the AMIT Pomer school.

"We reached the Naharayim enclave at 10:15 and were asked to hand over the weapons at the kibbutz and begin the tour with the guide, who was very nice," Himi said.

"We got out of the bus at the observation point and started to see all the process of the pumps at the (former) Naharayim electricity plant. In the middle of the description, suddenly we heard a burst of fire. I looked up and saw the Jordanian soldier firing from the observation tower.

"I shouted to the girls to go down the bank which was covered in mustard plants in bloom. The girls started to take cover as one burst came after another.

"The soldier saw that he was not succeeding, so he came after us to the edge (of the slope) and started firing at us from face-to-face distance. He had to change a magazine and when he did so, which didn't work, that was the end of it. It was a nightmare. I still can't take in what happened here.

"I started to call the girls who were around me and saw that some of them didn't answer me. I said to myself, 'What will happen until help comes?' so I started to push them into the field and covered them until help came.

"Afterwards, I asked the children to get back on the bus. The Jordanian soldiers were by then prepared for what had happened. They came down but didn't allow us to touch our dead and wounded.

"We struggled with them and took several of the casualties onto the bus and the rest, they, (Jordanians) took them to Jordan." The surviving youngsters along with their teachers were taken to the clubhouse at nearby Kibbutz Geshar, where they were given first aid where necessary, food and drink and telephones to call their anxious parents.

"They are hysterical. We didn't tell them all the truth. We told them that some are wounded and some of them would not be coming back to us," said Himi at the kibbutz before leaving to continue the process of identifying the youngsters killed in the massacre.

## Clinton condemns shooting

By HILLEL KUTTNER and agencies

WASHINGTON — President Bill Clinton condemned yesterday's shooting in which seven Israeli schoolgirls were murdered, but urged that "no one jump to any undue conclusions" that the killing came in response to tensions over Har Homa.

"There is no evidence at this moment that this terrible incident is related to the tensions in the area over the issues," Clinton told reporters as he left the White House for a trip to North Carolina. "For all we know, this may have been just a deranged person. And I think it is important, given King Hussein and Jordan's long record of reaching for peace and reconciliation, that no one jump to any undue conclusions.

"We don't have the facts. ... But we have no reason to believe that this was politically motivated by any larger group or anything. We just don't know that."

Clinton called the shootings a "senseless denial of a future for these children" and said, "There is no justification or excuse for these acts. I condemn this act in the strongest possible terms."

Clinton said he would keep the slain girls in his thoughts when he visited a Florida elementary school today.

"I call on the leaders and the people in the region to condemn violence," Clinton said.

According to a Jordanian official here, "there is a possibility" that King Hussein might cancel his visit to Washington to supervise the investigation into the killing. Hussein returned home from Spain after hearing the news of the shoot-

ing and at minimum will not arrive in Washington on Saturday as scheduled, the official said.

"Obviously, he's concerned about what happened because it was in Jordan and these [victims] were obviously guests. He wanted to deal with it firsthand."

Ambassador Fayez Tarawne called his counterpart Eiyahu Ben-Eliassar to express his condolences, an Israeli Embassy official said.

Clinton told reporters he had not spoken to Hussein but had conveyed his sympathy to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Hussein is scheduled to meet with Clinton on Monday.

Clinton said the incident "will bear heavily on my mind" and that there is "no justification or excuse" for it. He also urged leaders in the region to "do everything in their power to create an atmosphere in which violence is rejected rather than embraced."

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns called the killer a "madman," but said he did not know that he was "certifiably crazy."

"Anyone, any soldier, who opens fire on a group of schoolgirls is a mad person, absolutely," Burns said.

Burns said the US believes Hussein will carry through with his visit, but that it would "obviously understand" a decision to postpone it.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright issued a statement, calling the shooting "especially heart-rending."

"The loss of children is particularly tragic because it is through the peace process that we are trying to create for them a better future," she

said.

The Palestinian Authority also expressed its condolences.

Ahmed Abdel-Rahman, PA Cabinet secretary, said, "I hope there will be nothing in the future like this tragedy, against innocent people, girls, who have nothing to do with war and politics."

He was relieved to hear the killer was not a Palestinian.

"Perhaps it came from what he read in the newspaper concerning King Hussein's letter to Netanyahu."

Hanan Ashrawi, PA Higher Education Minister, said the massacre "was the result of the extremely volatile situation created by the Israeli government's policy on settlements, of actually creating on the Arab side and the Palestinian side an atmosphere of hostility and distrust."

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and the Security Council also condemned the murders.

A spokesman for Annan said in a statement the UN chief "deplores this act of violence and extends condolences to the families of the victims and the government and people of Israel."

"Today's tragic incident highlights the need to renew confidence in the peace process, whose objective is the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East," the statement added.

Council President Zbigniew Wlosowicz of Poland told reporters that council members "learned with great sorrow and concern of the tragic attack on Israeli children earlier today near the Jordan river."

French President Jacques Chirac added his voice to the condemnations. "I learned with honor of this abominable attack ... and wish to share with you my indignation and sadness," Chirac aides quoted him as messaging Netanyahu from Brazil, where Chirac is on an official visit.

Jon Immanuel contributed to this report.

## Tichon: The pain is all of ours

LIAT COLLINS

Expressions of shock, sorrow and condolences were made across the political spectrum following yesterday's deadly attack in Naharayim. Nearly all the responses included a call for restraint.

Knesset Speaker Dan Tichon sent a message of condolence to Beit Shמש Mayor Danny Vaknin in the name of the whole House saying, "The pain is all of ours and it is our duty to stand as one in the face of this type of madman: for life, for peace and for the future of our children."

Mercetz leader Yossi Sarid announced his party would postpone a no-confidence motion scheduled for Monday "because it is not appropriate during a week of mourning."

Education Minister and National Religious Party leader Zevulun Hammer said: "The murder is shocking proof of just how far the age of peace is from being peaceful." The faction issued a statement

saying, "there is no consolation and no atonement for the deaths of innocent schoolgirls."

Dalia Izak, head of the Labor party's response team, stressed that "words can cause madmen to carry out hideous crimes." MK Yossi Beilin, a candidate for the Labor party leadership, said both Israel and the Arab states must be aware that words can cause people to squeeze the trigger.

MK Michael Kleiner (Gesher), head of the Land of Israel Front, described the letter sent by King

Hussein to Netanyahu as "an invitation to murder."

Bonnet faction chairman Eliczer Zandberg said the "terror attack is additional proof that a crisis with verbal attacks can on the Arab side turn into an act of violence. It's a real danger that needs to be dealt with."

The Hadash faction issued a statement condemning "the dreadful murder of schoolgirls in the Jordan Valley," and called for restraint and "to avoid cynically exploiting the tragedy to worsen the crisis in relations with Jordan."

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That on the 12th of March, 1997, the Offeror submitted to the Securities Authority, the Companies Registrar, the Tel-Aviv Stock Exchange (hereinafter: "TASE"), and to Leumi Insurance Holdings Ltd. (hereinafter: "the Company"), a purchase offer pursuant to a specification, in accordance with the Securities Regulations (Purchase Offer), 5754-1994 (hereinafter: "the Purchase Offer Regulations"), addressed to all holders of Ordinary Shares of NIS 0.01 n.v. of the Company (hereinafter: "the Holders") for the purchase of up to 317,124,199 of their shares in the Company (hereinafter: "the Specification").

1. (a) The Offeror wishes to acquire up to 317,124,199 shares of the Company (hereinafter: "the Shares") from all the Holders of Ordinary Shares of NIS 0.01 n.v. of the Company who accept the Offer, pursuant to the conditions of the Purchase Offer; provided that no Holder will be permitted to sell more than 42.202% of his shareholdings in the Company on March 18, 1997, at the end of the business day (hereinafter: "the Determining Date"); and provided that on the date of submission of Notice of Acceptance by him, he will hold a number equal to the number of shares listed in the Notice of Acceptance, and that will not engage in any transaction involving said shares so long as the Notice of Acceptance has not been cancelled, according to the procedure set forth in the specification.
- (b) In calculating the amount to which the Shareholder is entitled under Paragraph 5.1 of the Specification, fractions of a share of NIS 0.01 n.v. equal to or greater than one-half share will be considered a complete share; fractions of a share of NIS 0.01 n.v. which are less than one-half share will not be included in the calculation.

2. (a) The price to be paid by the Offeror will be the sum of NIS 3.2755 per share, as adjusted for increases in the Consumer Price Index published in March 1997, for February 1997, in comparison with the index published for January 1997 (143.7), as set forth in the Specification. The payment will be executed on March 30, 1997, in the manner provided in the Specification.
- (b) The last price of share on the TASE prior to the date of the Specification, on March 12, 1997, was NIS 2.54 per share. The average price per share from January 12, 1997 (the date on which the shares were listed for trading on the TASE), until March 12, 1997, is NIS 2.461 per share.

3. The Purchase Offer will be effected by way of a member of the TASE, Bank Leumi LeIsrael B.M. (hereinafter: "the Offer Coordinator") in the manner prescribed in the Purchase Offer.
4. It will be possible to submit Acceptance Notices during the period beginning Wednesday, March 19, 1997, and ending on Thursday, March 27, 1997, at 13:00.

A Non-Registered Shareholder - will submit Notice of Acceptance to members of the TASE on the above mentioned days in accordance with the instructions contained in paragraph 8.2 of the Specification.

A Registered Shareholder - will submit Notice of Acceptance to the Offer Coordinator at his office, 2 Lilenblum Street, Tel-Aviv, in accordance with the instructions contained in paragraph 8.3 of the Specification.

Copies of the full text of the Specification may be obtained at bank branches, from members of the TASE and from the Offer Coordinator, at the office whose address is listed above.

The full text of the Specification is binding text, and nothing in this Notice or its contents shall be construed as obligating the Offeror or to constitute an offer of any kind on the part of the Offeror.

Date of Specification: 12 March, 1997

PARTICIPATIE MAATSCHAPPIJ GRAAFSCHAP HOLLAND, N.V.

\*This is a translation of the Hebrew notice published in Hebrew in "HaHaretz" and in "Maariv" on March 13, 1997.





# Albania asks Europe for help

News agencies

THE HAGUE - The European Union is seriously considering a request from the Albanian government to provide military assistance to Tirana to restore order, Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van Mierlo said yesterday.

"As far as I am concerned all options are open and the request deserves serious consideration," he told Dutch television.

Albanian President Sali Berisha and all political parties called yesterday for NATO's European members to provide the military assistance "to restore the constitutional order and to preserve the country's integrity."

Van Mierlo, who visited Albania last weekend for emergency talks with Berisha, had earlier telephoned EU colleagues, including Germany's Klaus Kinkel, British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind and Italy's Lamberto Dini, to discuss possible options to deal with the crisis.

Albania slid further towards anarchy yesterday as gunfire crackled around the capital Tirana and authorities closed the main airport after a nearby military base was looted.

Italy and Albania also asked the UN Security Council yesterday for an urgent meeting to consider the crisis as it spread nationwide.

The requests were made separately by the Albanian and Italian missions to the United Nations in a letter to the current council president, Zbigniew Wlosowicz of Poland.

"Upon instructions from my government ... I have the honor to request you to convene an urgent meeting of the Security Council for the purpose of considering the situation in Albania," Albanian

Ambassador Pellumb Kulla said in his letter. UN spokesman Fred Eckhard said the Italians had also requested a council meeting. He also said the Albanian ambassador to the United Nations met Secretary-General Kofi Annan to brief him on the deteriorating situation in his country.

Such requests are usually circulated among the 15 council members, who decide by consensus when and if they will honor the request.

In Brussels, the Western European Union (WEU), the EU's fledgling defence arm, said it had received no request from Albania to provide military assistance to restore order to the troubled Balkan country.

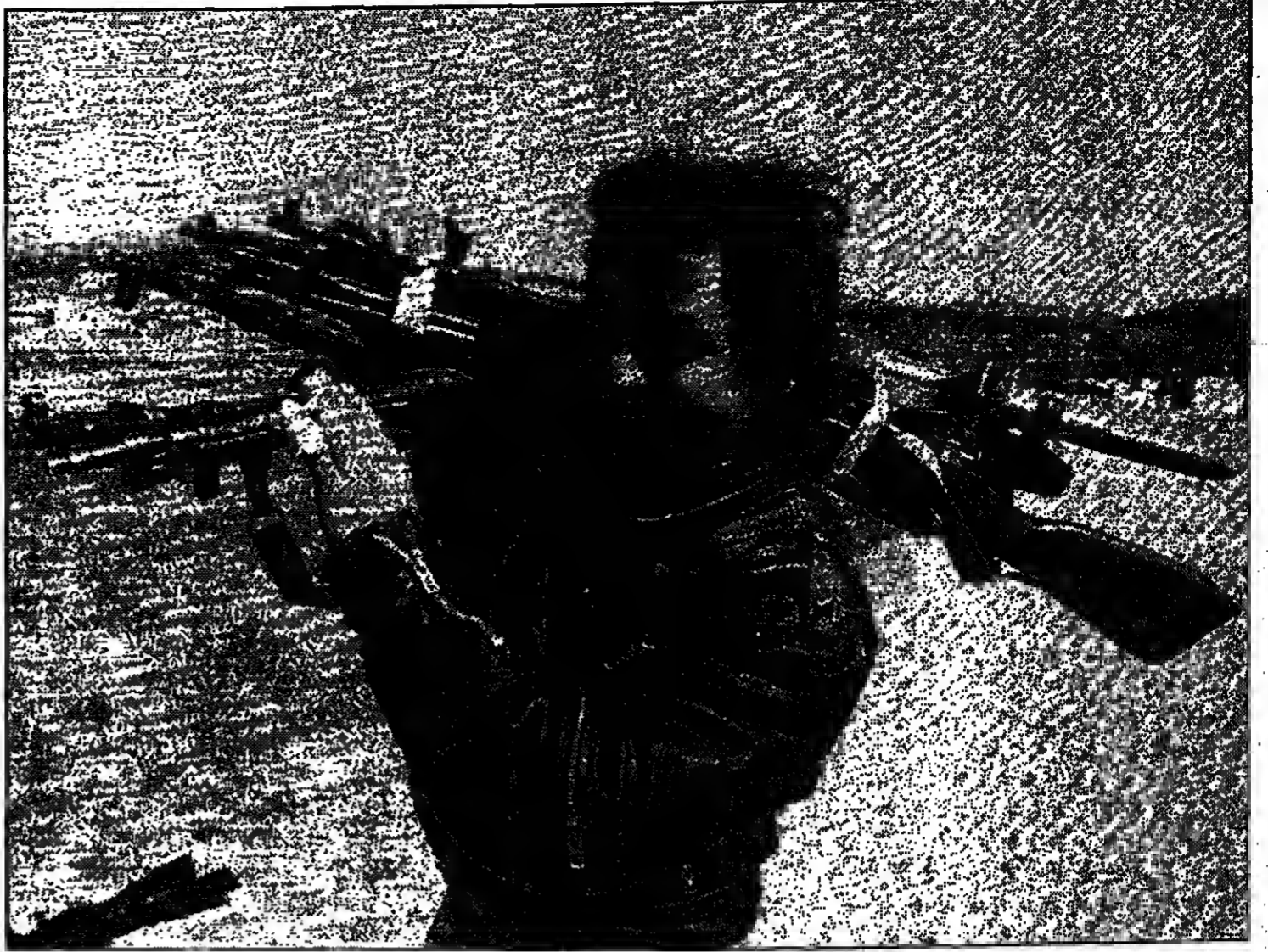
"There has been no formal approach," said one source at the Brussels headquarters of the organization. He added that the mechanism for such an approach did not exist, but Berisha could ask NATO's European allies individually to intervene.

Meanwhile, NATO ambassadors were reported to have met in informal session to draft a statement calling for an end to violence and political dialogue.

Both the EU and NATO have called for support for efforts by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to defuse the crisis. Military analysts said the WEU, which was revamped only a few years ago, had neither the will nor the operational capacity at present to conduct a major military intervention.

"Technically, only WEU members can call for a WEU operation.

Members who want to be involved could of course call for it to be done under the auspices of the WEU, but at the moment that is most doubtful," said one military source.



An Albanian rebel carries a handful of weapons delivered from a supply truck.

## Arrest made in Cosby murder

LOS ANGELES (AP) - One man is under arrest and two other people were being questioned yesterday in the shooting death of the son of popular entertainer Bill Cosby.

The arrest resulted from a tip that "a Russian gang member" was involved, said the editor of a popular tabloid, the *National Enquirer*.

Prosecutors are expected to file murder charges against the suspect soon, police Chief Willie Williams told a late-night news conference. He said the two others are a man and a woman.

When the arrest was made in the San Fernando Valley, investigators seized evidence linking the man to the roadside killing of Ennis Cosby on Jan. 16, Williams said. He would not elaborate. He did not give the man's name, but said he is believed to be a Los Angeles resident.

"We're not releasing any information on the reasons why (the arrest was made) at this time, but we are very comfortable, based on our work with the district attorney," Williams said.

The death of Cosby, 27, a doctoral candidate in special education at Columbia University, prompted a huge public outpouring of sympathy, and hundreds of calls offering tips to police.

The elder Cosby is the star of the television show *Cosby*. A tipster interested in the *National Enquirer's* \$100,000 reward offer was a key to solving the murder, tabloid editor Steve Coz said yesterday.

"We got a call on our Cosby reward tip line in January, within days of the killing," Coz said. "It was a tip that a Russian gang member was involved in the slaying."

"Normally it would have sounded like some nut - the Russian mob?" Coz said. "But this guy sounded so credible, we began to pursue it. We started investigating the Russian mob in L.A."

He said the man, who provided an *Enquirer* reporter with a pager number, told the paper "his friend heard point blank that he heard a Russian gang member say, 'I shot

a black boy'." He said his paper gave the pager number and name to police.

Police wouldn't comment on Coz's account.

Coz said the tipster helped police find the gun by showing the area a few km from the crime scene where it had been dumped.

It was eventually recovered after a thorough search of the area. Ballistics experts identified the gun as the weapon used to kill Ennis Cosby, the *Daily News* of New York reported yesterday.

In a statement issued through their Los Angeles publicist, the Cosby family thanked the LAPD.

"We realize how tough it must have been on them every day. We felt certain and had every hope that they would find the suspect and that the process of jurisprudence would unfold," the statement said.

Cosby spokesman David Brokaw told the *Today* show this morning that the Cosbys showed "a real sense of triumph, exuberance and something along the lines of some sort of closure."

## Nigerian workers seize foreign hostages

LAGOS (Reuters) - Delicate negotiations were in progress yesterday to try to free 20 foreigners held hostage on a barge by Nigerians demanding work, officials of the company at the centre of the crisis said.

"We are still talking. It is very delicate negotiations," said an official of the French oil contracting firm ETPM, which is going through its second hostage-taking in Nigeria since December.

The hostages are 16 Frenchmen, three Britons and an American working for ETPM. They are held on company barge DLBI by about 70 local people demanding employment.

Other sources said the locals,

some of whom also work for ETPM, wanted better conditions of services.

Western diplomats from the nations involved said the hostages had not been harmed.

"We didn't get any information that the hostages are in bad shape so we think they are reasonably all right," one said.

ETPM went through a similar crisis last Christmas when 28 of its foreign workers including 10 Filipinos and nine Frenchmen were held on a barge offshore by 60 Nigerian workers demanding higher wages.

Apart from being deprived of food for two of the five days they were held captive, the hostages

were not harmed.

The latest crisis began when the local workers seized the barge with the foreigners on board offshore in the Escravos area off the midwestern oil coastal town of Warri.

The barge beached yesterday near Warri, Lagos diplomats said.

The French embassy in Lagos was in touch with ETPM and monitoring the negotiations going

on between the French company and the villagers on the situation, they said.

French company Lyonnaise des Eaux-Dumez said in Paris that ETPM was a joint venture between it and McDermott International Inc.

ETPM spokeswoman in Paris, Ariane Malzac, told a French television the problem was linked to rivalries between local groups.

## Banker swindles \$25m. for husband

BRUSSELS (AP) - In one of the biggest fraud cases in Belgian banking history, an executive of Credit Lyonnais Belgium swindled the bank out of 850 million francs (\$25 million), the bank said yesterday.

CLB General Manager Philippe Cloes said Daisy Ragolle, an executive of the bank's branch in Ghent, and her husband, businessman Laurent Demey, were both arrested in connection with the case.

"We traced the transfers to her husband's accounts and companies belonging to him in Belgium and abroad," Cloes said in a telephone interview.

"She did it for love, for her husband," he said. The two lived separately.

He said Ragolle, 50, who had been with the bank for 30 years, used her position as controller of regional transactions to embezzle funds through foreign exchange and treasury transactions.

"She knew exactly what to do,"

Cloes said. "We had a great deal of confidence in her. The biggest amounts were over the last few months." The case came to light when other banks started noticing unusual transactions and warned CMB.

The bank took action Tuesday and an internal audit team confronted her with the accusations. The police came in to make the arrest.

Demey is chairman of Waregem soccer club, once one of Belgium's most celebrated teams now languishing in the second division. Demey also owns a road construction company, industrial bakeries and several hotels in French and Swiss ski resorts.

CLB said many of the bank accounts where the money ended up have been blocked. He stressed the bank as such would not suffer financially.

"We are in the process of recuperating most of it," Cloes said, adding that insurance would cover the rest.

## One hurt in Paris store explosion

PARIS (AP) - A package bomb exploded in a store in central Paris yesterday, slightly injuring the owner and causing minor damage.

The package was thrown into a home decoration store on Paris's Left Bank, an area popular with tourists. It did not cause a fire.

A police source said someone threw a package through the store's window at around 2 p.m., and the bomb exploded after the owner picked it up to throw it out of the store.

The bomb injured the owner's eyes and face, but his condition was not serious, said the source,

who spoke on customary anonymity.

There were conflicting accounts from witnesses.

Jerome Ertola, who was at a cash machine at a bank next door to the store, said he saw a man in a beige raincoat in front of the store.

Ertola said he heard a "tubid" saw smoke coming from the store and the man in the raincoat running down a side street.

Then the injured man staggered out of the store, he said.

"He was bloodied on the face, neck and fingers," Ertola said.

## Tories 24 points below Labor

LONDON (AP) - An opinion poll published yesterday put the Conservative Party 24 points behind the Labor Party, underlining the government's failure to recover popularity as national elections loom.

The poll by Opinion Research Business for London's *Evening Standard* put Labor on 53 percent support, the Conservatives 29 percent, and the Liberal Democratic Party 12 percent.

Labor was up two points from ORB's survey a month ago, and the Conservatives were down three points.

The poll was in line with other recent soundings which suggest Prime Minister John Major's government is headed for the biggest defeat since Labor won a landslide victory after World War II in 1945.

The government overhaul reflects "the president's extreme concern over the situation in the economy, the social sphere and over how the military reform is proceeding," Yastzhemsky said.

Chernomyrdin and his new top deputy, Anatoly Chubais, will keep their jobs, but many other ministers and top officials are expected to be fired.

Those responsible for economics and finance are considered particularly vulnerable. Yeltsin has ordered cuts in the number of ministries and federal agencies, and the prime minister has promised to bring more free-market reforms into the government.

The largely hard-line State Duma, the lower house of parliament, has sharply attacked the planned government reorganization, saying the changes will continue Yeltsin's "destructive" course of economic reform.

On the second yearzeit of our beloved  
**Rabbi Dr. LOUIS BERNSTEIN**  
we will gather at the Eretz Hachaim Cemetery on  
Wednesday, March 19 (10 Adar II) at 9 a.m.  
The Family

In deep sorrow we mourn the passing of our beloved  
mother, grandmother and great-grandmother  
**MILLIE GLEICHER** ז"ל  
Gleicher and Knoll Families

The Azkara in loving memory of  
**SYLVIA BERNSTEIN** ז"ל and **GAIL BELKIN** ז"ל  
will be held at the Herzliya Cemetery on Thursday, March 20, 1997, at 1:30 p.m.  
The Bernstein, Butchins, Geshen and Belkin Families

The tombstone in loving memory of  
**MAX SEGAL** ז"ל  
(formerly of Dublin)  
will be unveiled ז"ל on Sunday, March 16 (7 Adar II, 5757)  
at Har Hamenuchot, Givat Shaul, at 3:30 p.m.  
We will meet at the main gate at 3:15 p.m.  
The Family

On the occasion of the 20th yearzeit of the passing of our  
beloved Rebbe  
**Rav PINKY BAK** ז"ל  
a memorial service will be held at the Eretz Hachaim  
Cemetery, Beit Shemesh, in the chapel, at 8 p.m.,  
Thursday, March 20, 1997, Motza'ei Ta'anit Esther,  
followed by an *aliyah lakaver*.  
Akiva Bak will be with us.  
His Students and Friends

With deep sorrow we announce the death of my beloved  
husband, our dear father, grandfather, and brother  
**SAM COLTHOF** ז"ל  
Wife: Ineke  
Daughter: Esther Muskat and husband, Rehovot  
Son: Jacob Colthof and wife, Jerusalem  
Sister: Eva Philipson, Jerusalem  
and their families.  
Shiva at Beit Bar, 56 Derech Hevron, Jerusalem

## Yeltsin reorganizes before Clinton summit

MOSCOW (AP) - President Boris Yeltsin will complete the reorganization of his government before traveling to Helsinki next week to meet with President Clinton, a spokesman said yesterday.

"Maximum clarity regarding the composition of the reorganized Russian government" will be achieved before the March 19-21 summit, presidential spokesman Sergei Yastzhemsky said on Echo Moscow radio.

Yeltsin conferred with Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin in the Kremlin yesterday to work out details of the Cabinet shakeup he ordered last week.

The president has accused the Cabinet of failing to deal with pressing economic problems, including mounting back wages, faulty tax collection and corruption.

The government overhaul reflects "the president's extreme concern over the situation in the economy, the social sphere and over how the military reform is proceeding," Yastzhemsky said.

Chernomyrdin and his new top deputy, Anatoly Chubais, will keep their jobs, but many other ministers and top officials are expected to be fired.

Those responsible for economics and finance are considered particularly vulnerable. Yeltsin has ordered cuts in the number of ministries and federal agencies, and the prime minister has promised to bring more free-market reforms into the government.

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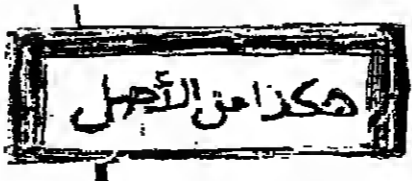
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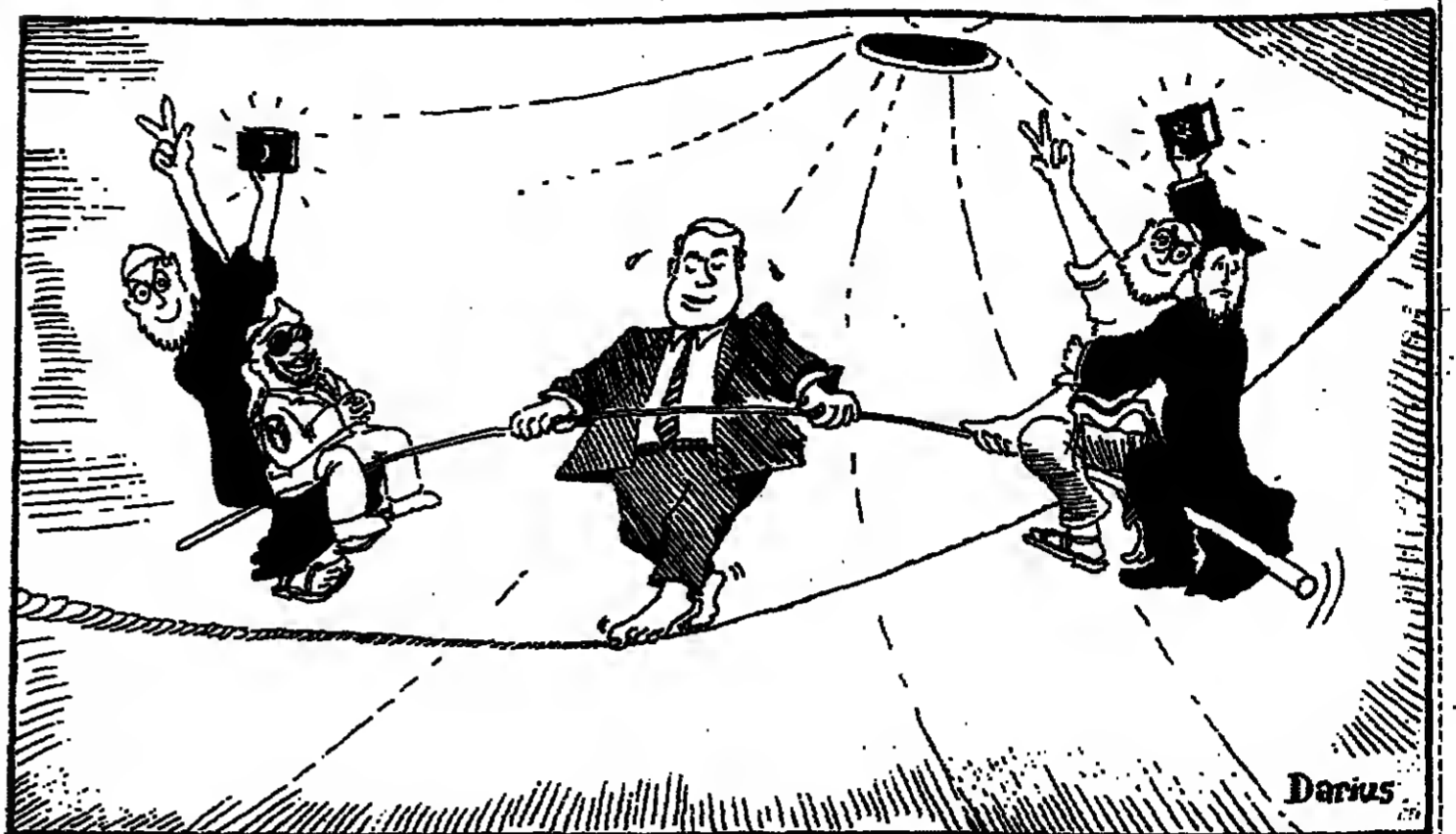
## Netanyahu's precarious balancing act

Mutual distrust and an inability to please all of the people all of the time appear to be the stalling factors in the peace process, David Makovsky writes.

At one moment during a dreary, post-midnight negotiating session a couple months ago where only Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, and a translator were together in a room, sources say Netanyahu looked at Arafat and said, as if he had just had an epiphany, "the problem is, you don't trust me!" Arafat, who until that point had been using an Arabic translator, burst out in English: "Yes, that is right."

The issue of trust has been thrust to the forefront due to the dual nature of negotiations, namely negotiating both with a peace partner and, in a sense, negotiating simultaneously with constituents. Netanyahu has been seeking to bring Likud supporters along the peace path by trying to balance every step towards the Palestinians with a step towards his own people. One day he pulled back 9 percent from the territories; and another day he built Har Homa. Netanyahu proudly acknowledges in discussion with Americans and Palestinians that

since the peace partner will always suspect the worst. This sense of half-heartedness has also extracted an international price. As Labor MK Shimon Peres said this week: "The price of coexistence is Israel's isolation in the region and in the world." Netanyahu is certainly not the only person negotiating while always looking over his shoulder. This week, Arafat released leading Hamas militant Ibrahim Maqadmeh just after he convened a unity conference involving Hamas's participation. So on one hand, Arafat can also feel satisfied that he is enlarging the peace tent by having Hamas take part in consultations, but in a similar vein to Netanyahu, the cost for this consensus could come at the other side's expense.



"The problem is, you don't trust me," said Netanyahu. Arafat replied: "Yes, that is right."

While Netanyahu uses domestic constraints in his conversations with Arab leaders, the question remains how long will Netanyahu and other Arab leaders be able to maneuver between the requirements of the peace process and satisfying their constituents. On one hand, there is no doubt that Netanyahu has broadened domestic support for the peace process among Israelis, hovering at about 50 percent during the Labor period, has increased to over 70 percent, and support for meetings with Arafat is at over 80 percent. In a broad sense, Netanyahu's embrace of Oslo, however reluctant, coupled with Likud MK Michael Eitan's joint

final-status principles with Labor MK Yossi Beilin, has meant that the fault of Israeli politics no longer runs between Labor and Likud, but through the Likud party. It was only a few months ago that people were wondering whether Netanyahu was an ideologue who wanted no negotiations with Arafat at all. Now it is widely acknowledged that Netanyahu heads the pragmatic wing of the Likud and the question is not whether he supports the peace process but whether he needs to take some supplementary unilateral actions that will make the peace process more palatable to his supporters.

Yet, as Netanyahu goes down the road to Oslo, he cannot expect to base his coalition upon the parliamentary support from those ideologues whose entire self-image is based upon their opposition to Oslo such as MKs Ze'ev (Benny) Begin and Uzi Landau. Furthermore, Netanyahu will not be able to satisfy them because a future partition of the West Bank becomes clearer with every successive pullback, and Netanyahu's room to maneuver by taking counterbalancing steps proves to be harder.

Peres said Labor was successful in building Jerusalem without causing the Security Council and General Assembly to denounce Israel. But this too occurred in a pre-Oslo mode, and constructing Har Homa as one of the last elements of the "ring" around Jerusalem is happening in a totally different political environment from the building of Ramot or Gilo. Netanyahu is correct that there is nothing in the Oslo agreements which forbids Israel to build in Jerusalem, but people in the international community ask how such construction reconciles itself with the spirit of Oslo, namely Israel's commitment to negotiate the future status of the city in talks that are supposed to conclude in

Continued on Page 20

## Not getting the message across

Israel's ambassador to the US is the first to admit that the embassy's public relations campaign could stand some improving. Hillel Kuttler reports from Washington on what's gone wrong.



Israel's ambassador to the US, Elyahu Ben-Elissar (Israel Sun)

So Israel's public-relations front, Ambassador Elyahu Ben-Elissar's tenure in Washington might seem a nightmare gone bad. He's been challenged almost since his arrival, six months ago. From the Western Wall Tunnel episode last September to the current Har Homa/further redeployment/PA offices/Gaza conference quadruple-whammy, Ben-Elissar has faced a stream of difficulties. Some American-based Israeli diplomats complain that Ben-Elissar is not plugged in to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and that they are consequently at a disadvantage in the US, leaving a gaping hole in getting Israel's message out. They cite last week's triumphant visit to Washington by PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, who popped up on American interview programs while Ben-Elissar was back in Israel and unavailable for rebuttal.

Israel Public Affairs Committee asserts that Netanyahu's decision last week to close down the four PA offices again highlights the shortcomings of Jerusalem's failure to dispense adequate information to Washington. "The story of the four PA offices: Who knew what? Where? When?" he asks. When the response comes that it remains unknown which offices were ordered closed, the official exclaims: "Right! That's a classic example of what I'm talking about!" Ben-Elissar volunteers that "there is no doubt whatsoever that the embassy's public relations

campaign could stand some improving, that his efforts and those of other embassy officials and consuls general have not suc-

ceeded. However, even critics state that any of Ben-Elissar's shortcomings must be seen against the backdrop of the lingering Netanyahu-David Levy feud, which has limited access to the party line and corroded Israel's ability to stand up for itself in the US. From that perspective, Ben-Elissar is fighting a battle with one hand tied behind his back. But, Ben-Elissar maintains, he is "absolutely in the picture" and speaks every day with the Foreign Ministry and when necessary with Netanyahu's office, including many Fridays with the prime minister directly. "I won't be kept out of the picture. Nothing should be construed as circumventing me. It's not being done. I'm not worried about it," he says. On the one hand, Ben-Elissar insists that he is "absolutely" proactive in getting Israel's message out, while on the other maintaining that the most influential American communications outlets - CNN, The Washington Post and

The New York Times - continue to exhibit a "basic bias" against Israel that dooms the effort. "It's a biased press. They are one-track-minded. Not all of the American press, but some very important media organs, channels,

So how does Israel make its case? Ben-Elissar scratches his head, lifts his arm and shrugs. Jerusalem to be divided - period! "It's obvious. Look, CNN calling Arafat president in the news while the official language of the US [administration] is chairman, not president, this is already, of course, preempting. We are always being blamed, always being accused. So as long as this will be the case, I won't be satisfied and I will do whatever I can to change it." Har Homa is "actually the best example of unfairness," Ben-Elissar says. "It's hard to fight unfairness, it's hard to fight dishonesty." "Everybody knows that this is not a new settlement, in the sense of settlements in the West Bank or Gaza... It's actually a new housing neighborhood. Everybody knows it." So how does Israel make its case? Ben-Elissar scratches his head, lifts his left arm and shrugs.

Continued on Page 20

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# A different view of Oslo

Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat tells Jon Immanuel that Palestinians feel humiliated by Israel's unilateral decision-making

Behind the cries of "deceit" and "lies," few know what the Oslo accords actually have to say about the issues which have aroused the current furor concerning redeployment. Yet Saeb Erekat, the Palestinian chief negotiator on the issue, says it's there in black and white if only Israel would look. Further redeployment is to be from Area C only. Therefore, he asserts, the redeployment is a fraud. Quoting from Oslo 2, Art. XIII.8, he notes that Further redeployment (FRD) is from Area C and transfer of internal security responsibility (ITSR) to the Palestinian police in Areas B and C will be carried out in three phases.

This, Erekat says, is explicit. "Further redeployment is from Area C because further redeployment involves territorial transfer. There is no territorial transfer from B to A. That is how Mr. Netanyahu is trying to deceive us."

In his redeployment offer, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu gave the Palestinians 7 percent from Area B and 2% from Area C.

On the Israeli side, Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein counseled the government that the Oslo accords required a withdrawal from Area C but he did not say that a change of status from Area B to Area A did not count. And the US State Department made no distinction at all when it suggested a 10% redeployment.

Erekat admits that the demand for a 30% first phase redeployment was not realistic. "It's not specified how much the percentage is, but at least it should not be 2%." The 30% figure represented one-third of 90% of the West Bank which Palestinians hope to control by the end of the third phase of FRD in

August 1998. To back that hope, Erekat quotes from the Oslo agreement, Art. XVII. 2a. *The territorial jurisdiction of the (Palestinian Council) shall encompass ... Area C, which except for the issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations, will be gradually transferred to Palestinian jurisdiction in three phases.*

The statement, says Erekat, suggests that what should be left in Israeli hands after phase three is an "issue" like military locations, Jerusalem and settlements, rather than a great expanse of territory. Furthermore, he says, the Oslo Declaration of Principles (DOP) does not mention territory, but only borders, as an "issue" for permanent status talks.

"If we say that the PA jurisdiction over the West Bank covers West Bank territory except for permanent status issues like Jerusalem and settlements, I don't think Mr. Netanyahu should go to and tell [Yisrael Ba'aliya] chief [Natan] Sharansky and the Ma'fald [National Religious Party] 40 days ago that it would be an insignificant transfer from C to B. They poisoned the atmosphere," he said.

Theo there is Art. XVII.8. *The first phase of the redeployment (prior to March 1996) will cover populated areas in the West Bank.* Since Area A and Area B are the populated areas of the West Bank, it again follows that "deployment to area B is in phase one, therefore further redeployment must refer to area C," Erekat says.

He cites more support in Art. XIII.2a. *Before March 1996, there will be a complete redeployment of Israeli military forces from Area B.* "If redeployment from



Saeb Erekat: "The redeployment is a fraud."

(David Rubinger)

Area B was completed more than a year ago how can we have a further redeployment from Area B today?" he asks.

Still, if Israel has withdrawn even from only 2% of Area C and no percentage of land to be transferred is specified in the Oslo agreement, then it has exercised a lawful first phase FRD. It might have to withdraw from 88% in the next two phases in order to redeploy to "specified military locations," but Oslo surely permits Israel to decide unilaterally. No, says Erekat, "I would like to tell Mr. Levy that they are trying to make peace with all the coalition members and then come in a humiliating fashion to dictate to us. That's totally unfair."

The issue of a unilateral decision is an anomaly considering that almost everything else in the Oslo agreement emphasizes cooperation and coordination. Erekat argues that Oslo simply does not permit unilateral decisions. He says that it does not mention a unilateral decision, although in the case of FRD it does not mention negotiations either. The Oslo DOP Art. XIII uses the same kind of language to describe the first-phase withdrawal from Palestinian towns, when there were negotiations, as it does to describe FRD.

Nevertheless lawyer Joel Singer, who phrased the Oslo accords, insists that a unilateral decision was intended and that it was understood by everyone involved. Netanyahu believes he has tried to steer a middle course, opening tunnels and closing PA offices, and making non-territorial concessions like freeing women prisoners and relaxing the closure to improve the atmosphere.

If the decision to build on Har Homa was a commitment to Israel's self-declared sovereignty in Jerusalem, and was expected to anger Palestinians, it follows that Netanyahu expected the FRD, his first territorial concession after Hebron, to be welcomed by the Palestinians. However, instead of balancing the expected anger over Har Homa it has made it worse, because of what appears to be a shortfall in territory. As former prime minister Shimon Peres said on Israel Radio on Wednesday, "It

**"The minute the bulldozers go up [Har Homa] God only knows the consequences."**

is one thing to zigzag, but his zig does not match his zag."

Har Homa touches the issue of both settlements and Jerusalem. Since it is inside the Israeli municipal boundaries of Jerusalem Israel does not consider it a settlement. But, says Erekat, the frame of reference for the Oslo agreements in the preamble to Oslo 2 is UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which calls for "withdrawal without delay by the parties to the conflict of their forces from territories occupied by them." It does not distinguish between the West Bank and the areas of Jerusalem occupied in 1967.

However, Oslo itself does make the distinction. The frame of reference is 242 as interpreted by Israel. Erekat admits that Israel over accepted that Jerusalem had the same status as the West Bank but, he says, Oslo includes the right of Palestinians in Jerusalem to vote in Palestinian council elections.

Perhaps in truth Har Homa is less an Oslo violation than an issue which personifies the limitations of Oslo to many Palestinian supporters of the peace process, and the argument over its interpretation might tear it apart. Har Homa is more visible from Bethlehem than Kiryat Arba is from Hebron. When building starts on Har Homa thousands of Palestinians currently basking in Area A, shielded from Israeli rule and even shielded from a view of Jerusalem, will witness daily a tree-draped hill changing into a building site, then into houses, then into a self-contained Israeli township. It will become a visible symbol of Israeli territorial encroachment on what they historically consider to be part of Bethlehem.

"The minute the bulldozers go up Jabal Abu Ghneim [Har Homa] I think God only knows the consequences of what will happen," says Erekat. He wondered at the Israeli warnings that it will encounter violence with force, while it refuses to encounter the Palestinians in a civilized debate over the provisions of the Oslo accords. "They are treating us like \*\*\*\*, as people to whom they can dictate what is good for them," he says, in a sudden explosion of invective. "But the last thing we want to see happen is violence, that's the truth."

## ANALYSIS

# Crisis cycle

Barry Rubin sees the latest tensions in Palestinian-Israeli relations as part of a predictable pattern.

The course of the Israel-Palestinian peace process would be critical if it were not so potentially tragic. In just 10 months we have already gone through four cycles of alternating crisis and celebration: the aftermath of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's election, the opening of the Western Wall Tunnel exit and ensuing violence, the Hebron talks, and now the Har Homa/first redeployment crisis. Each of them has followed a remarkably similar pattern.

Each time, foreign governments and media proclaim the death of negotiations and the imminence of catastrophe, with Israel being to blame. Every time, Netanyahu makes concessions, less than Palestinians wanted but more than was previously thought possible or the prime minister's right-wing supporters thought advisable.

Afterward, there is international rejoicing at how the peace process was saved at the last minute.

The funniest part is how politicians and journalists abroad have faced each phase in a state of total amnesia, forgetting what has gone before or what is to come after. They have had a most difficult time learning that both sides are simply playing a very tough game of bargaining, showing a willingness to go to the brink in order to obtain more or yield less.

It should be quite clear by now that Netanyahu and Arafat desperately want to avoid wrecking the process. They are moved not by fear of foreign pressure but from a need to justify their own leadership and prove they can deliver benefits to constituents.

Netanyahu must show he is bringing peace with security; Arafat must demonstrate that he is advancing toward a Palestinian state with its capital in east Jerusalem.

A collapse of negotiations would reveal their total failure. Given the political balance of forces, Netanyahu would be replaced by those arguing that both peace and security require more concessions to the Palestinians (i.e., the Labor Party); while Arafat might be shoved aside by those decrying his whole peace policy as a mistake (i.e., Hamas and other militants).

While unrestrained violence would be costly for both sides, Israel would certainly be able to flatten Arafat's incipient state, wiping out all the Palestinian gains of the last five years. For Arafat in particular, a recourse to large-scale fighting is dangerous - a little terrorism might be useful but too much would be suicidal - and would play into the hands of both his Palestinian rivals and Israeli hardliners. By abandoning the Oslo process, the Palestinians would lose their Western backing without gaining much real help from Arab states.

Moreover, Arafat's goal is not to blow up the peace process but to gain greater advantage within that framework. After all, when the Palestinians protest so much about the amount of land they gained in the first Israeli withdrawal as insufficient, the object

is to get much more in the second and third round. While the Israeli disadvantage is that its tough bargaining is internationally considered as illegitimate, the Palestinians' problem is that they are by far the weaker partner and have little direct leverage over Israel.

Current Palestinian tactics are based on two considerations: their own weakness and the Netanyahu government's stated aims.

First, the fact that Palestinian assets are quite limited makes Arafat's cries of complaint and plea for international intervention all the more passionate. But aside from violence, he has relatively little recourse aside from words.

Another approach would be for the Palestinians to make concessions in order to get more from Israel, the kind of give-and-take bargaining usually associated with negotiations. But this points to the second, underlying, problem. A Labor party government in Israel might say that it would agree to a Palestinian state and some kind of arrangement regarding Jerusalem if the Palestinians would meet a whole series of Israeli demands over territorial compromise, Jerusalem, security arrangements and so on. But Arafat knows that Netanyahu opposes a Palestinian state, any concessions over Jerusalem or giving up any significant territory currently held by Jewish settlements.

To make matters worse from the Palestinian viewpoint, they see the prime minister faces intensive pressure from within his coalition to give up even less than he is willing to do. Each issue, then, is fought in the context of the long-term - actually only two years - perspective of the final settlement. Thus, Har Homa does not signify merely building a few thousand apartments to meet housing needs - quite legal under the Oslo agreements - but is designed to close a ring of Jewish communities around eastern Jerusalem so Israel need never yield any control over the Palestinian neighborhoods there.

Israel's deciding to give up only 9 percent of the West Bank in the first round of withdrawals - a unilateral choice legal under the Oslo accords and recently reconfirmed as such by the US - means that the Netanyahu government intends to retain control over most of that territory and to block the emergence of any Palestinian state.

So, this present crisis, as with past ones, will pass. Perhaps international criticism and Netanyahu's need to keep the process going will encourage some steps pleasing to the Palestinians over the Gaza airport, West Bank-Gaza passage, prisoner releases, or other matters. Then, for a few weeks, Netanyahu will be hailed as a pragmatic statesman again.

In the end, there will be only one crisis that really counts if and when the Palestinians conclude that they cannot get a final settlement that meets their minimal requirements. The good news is that this is still two years off. The bad news is that it gets closer each day.

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הכרזת תשנ"ז



# Living in isolation

## Karmeit Tzur

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

A pastoral landscape surrounds the homes of Karmeit Tzur. On a weekday, the only sounds are the shouts of the settlement's children at play. But the calm is deceptive. This hilltop community, between Beit Umar and Halhoul, fears that the upcoming redeployment putting the Palestinian Authority on its doorstep will eventually lead to its total isolation.

What happens to Karmeit Tzur — and the Samaria community of Yitzhar, similarly affected by the pullback — may provide a hint of what other settlements outside the main bloc can expect as the interim agreement with the Palestinians is implemented. The problem for the 70 families of Karmeit Tzur is that no plan has been formulated for the future of their community.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai relieved the most immediate worry this week. He gave a verbal guarantee that the access road leading to the settlement from Highway 60, the Halhoul bypass, would remain under Israeli control. But he left unanswered their demand for alternative access: a seven-kilometer arc of highway from the Etzion Bloc that would skirt Palestinian localities and join Route 60.

Some of the residents questioned the government's intention regarding the remaining two phases in the interim agreement; others view their current status as temporary.

"No one knows the complete picture regarding the interim agreement," says Esti Uliel, one of the settlement's activists. "When talks began about the Phase I pullback, there were rumors that the areas surrounding Karmeit Tzur and our entrance road would be transferred to the complete control of the Palestinian Authority."

Two weeks ago, the residents formed an action committee which intensively lobbied the Knesset and cabinet members. The campaign succeeded in winning Mordechai's promise regarding the current access road; however, Uliel stressed that the battle

would not be over until the seven-kilometer road is built.

"It was authorized by the previous government," Uliel says, adding that the stretch would bypass the neighboring village of Beit Umar and the El-Arubb refugee camp, linking up to Highway 60.

Another isolated community for which Route 60 is an increasingly important lifeline is Yitzhar, just outside Nablus. The 60 families there, like Karmeit Tzur's, will be surrounded by villages becoming Area B — civil administration by the Palestinians, security control by Israel — in the upcoming redeployment.

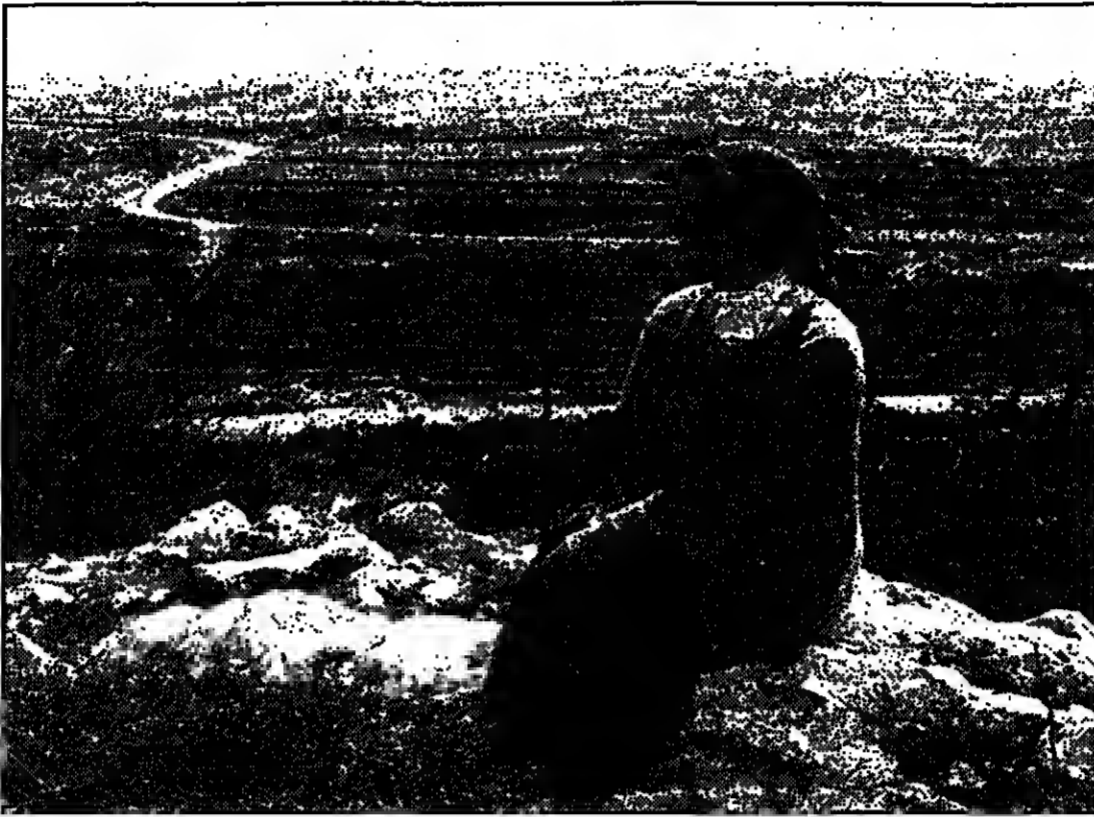
Yitzhar, a 10-minute drive from Joseph's Tomb, has been assured that the long access road linking it to Route 60 will remain Area C, administered solely by Israel.

"We are not so concerned about our situation but more worried about the future of other settlements in Judea and Samaria," settlement secretary Rafael Miron says.

Yebudit Tayar, spokeswoman for the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, agrees: "What we are concerned about is the shrinking of the white [Israeli administered] areas and the yellow and brown [PA] areas that are growing larger."

The council now intends to have more input into decisions regarding future pullbacks to prevent settlements from being cut off, Tayar says.

Karmeit Tzur, a religious settlement in Judea, and Na'ama, a secular community in the Jordan Valley, have little in common. But with the upcoming redeployment, Karmeit Tzur may well become like Na'ama: an isolated enclave surrounded by Palestinian-ruled territory.



he agreed that their security concerns demanded a response, according to Tayar.

Settlers say they are constantly given reason to worry. "Stones are thrown at our cars daily," Uliel says of the drive along Karmeit Tzur's access road.

Resident Shmuel Gillis, spending the day on guard duty, agrees. "The school buses are stoned almost daily," he says. "Just recently, the front window of one of the buses was shattered by a stone. My daughter, who was sitting in the front seat, was covered with glass, but luckily she wasn't injured." Gillis added that an IDF jeep accompanies all buses to and from the settlement.

That is little consolation to Nurit Raishi, a mother of four, who says, "Until the children return home from school, I am never completely at ease."

"Once the road is completed, it will make such a difference," Uliel says. "Do you know how easy it will be to get to Beersheba from here?"

Uliel emphasizes the importance of linking up settlements to main arteries. "People who view settlements as enclosed communities, surrounded by barbed wire and tanks, are making a mistake," she says. "Settlements must expand and grow like any other community."

RAHEL OFER, a mother of eight and one of the settlement's founding members, is concerned

Continued on Page 20

## Na'ama

By HERB KEINON

Liora Hasson sits in her living room in the Jordan Valley settlement of Na'ama, tears welling up in her eyes. She is torn. Torn between what she wants, and what she has. Between the way she would like things to be, and the way they are turning out. The Oslo Accords have placed Hasson in internal turmoil, constantly pulling her in opposite directions. The turmoil is evident when talking to her about the political situation. It's evident in her body language, in her tears, in the contradictions in her words. Hasson would love to stay in Na'ama forever, but has no illusions. She wants to give the peace process a chance, but is angry at the way it is being carried out. She wants to build for her future, but since Na'ama was left surrounded by the Palestinian autonomous area, she doesn't know where that future will be.

One of Hasson's neighbors, Anna Maller, is supervising work in a warehouse in Na'ama's agricultural area, as a number of Thai workers sift through and package bunches of fresh basil for export. The mixed smell of a variety of herbs provide the concrete structure with a background odor befitting a pizza parlor. Maller isn't beset by the turmoil that afflicts Hasson. The peace process is good, she says. That the government doesn't give more real assistance to the farmers in the valley is bad. It is also an indication that there is little intention of keeping the region as a civilian area.

Yet Maller is happy, upbeat. The family's business exporting herbs is — finally — turning a profit. She'll do it as long as she can. And when the time comes, she'll leave. She, too, doesn't believe Na'ama — or for that matter the entire Jordan Valley — has much of a future. "Nobody has done anything to ensure that there is a future here," Maller says. "If they had wanted a future, somebody would have made sure that Na'ama has 2,500 families, not 27. We are 27 families, between 15,000 people in Jericho, and 5,000 in Ouja. There is no 'population card' to play here. What are we talking about. Jews love to talk, but when it comes to actions..."

NA'AMA WAS the first Israeli settlement "to go," so to speak. Not bulldozed down, Yamit style, or handed over to the Palestinians, like the Civil Administration complex in Hebron. First to go in the sense that it was the first settlement surrounded by Area A, or the brown areas on the Oslo Accord maps that symbolize Autonomous Palestine. When Israel carries through with the next stage of withdrawal, Karmeit Tzur, sandwiched between Beit Umar and Halhoul, may be in a situation similar to Na'ama. Similar, but not the same. Whereas Jericho has throughout the years been known as a "quiet"

area, the same cannot be said of Halhoul. The bottom line, Hasson says, is that her settlement, indeed all settlements that are enclaves inside Palestinian autonomous zones, are doomed. Her advice for the Karmeit Tzur families: "Take a deep breath, be more aware of what is happening around you, and give it a chance. Be able to say that you tried. Don't become hysterical already. If I would have saved myself some sleepless nights..."

WHEN AUTONOMY came to the Jordan Valley in May 1994, Na'ama had 27 families. Four years later it has the same 27 families. The reason no one left is because to do so would entail taking a huge financial loss. Property there, according to Hasson, head of the settlement's absorption committee, is worth nothing. And the reason nobody has joined is simple: who wants to live in an enclave? The exception, she says, are the national religious, some of whom are fired by ideology. They are now willing to go and live in places like Kfar Darom and Netzarim, which are also enclaves. But Na'ama is not a religious settlement. As word began to filter out of talks between Palestinian and Israelis in 1994 that the Gaza/Jericho First plan included Ouja, just north of Jericho, and a corridor linking the two towns, not a few people in Na'ama — and the Jordan Valley — panicked. This arrangement would mean that they would be surrounded by the Palestinian Authority on three sides, and hedged in by the Jordan River on the other. Back then, the peace process was the Great Unknown. Nobody knew exactly what would happen.

Not that today matters are so crystal clear, but there have developed certain rules to the game. Granted, the rules are often broken, but a certain pattern of behavior has developed. But in 1994, the thought that this tiny settlement would be surrounded by the Palestinian Authority led to many sleepless nights — and to not a few protests. "It is never good to live inside an enclave," says Hasson, 40, beginning a dialogue replete with the contradictions that reflects both the complexity of the situation, and her own turmoil. "In the meantime it is OK, there have been no physical casualties. There is always the concern that some nut will shoot at us from the Palestinian base [nearby], or that masses will rush the settlement. I can't say that this never passes through my mind. That fear definitely exists. But life continues. The truth is, I expected things to be much worse."

What she expected were shootings on the bypass roads, or from cars passing in front of the settlement. These incidents did occur in September, but not in Jericho, rather in Gaza. The September riots kept Na'ama's residents locked in for five days, and the scenario remains unsettling, unnerving. It is a cause of concern now, especially because of threats of violence over Har Homa.

But on a day to day basis, Hasson says, life continues. Another piece of advice Hasson

**"If there is a Palestinian state here, we will leave. We just want to know now."**



Esti Uliel of Karmeit Tzur (top): "No one knows the complete picture regarding the interim agreement...It's like being completely enveloped by fog." Liora Hasson of Na'ama: "The reason nobody has joined us is simple — who wants to live in an enclave?" (Photos: Brian Hendler, Sarit Uziel)

**"People don't talk of peace anymore. Instead, they talk of peace of mind."**

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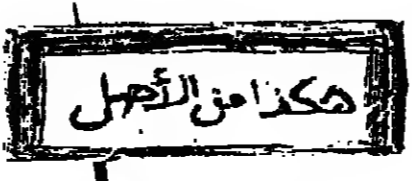
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MIDDLE ISRAEL



By ANOTZ ASA-EL

I wasn't long ago that Jerusalem's Shmuel Hanavi neighborhood epitomized what was called Second Israel, namely those who remained disenfranchised while their Ashkenazi, secular, better-educated brethren basked in power, contacts and mammon.

A VIEW FROM NOV



By MOSHE KOHN

Our society degenerating into senility precisely as we approach what the talmudic sage Rabbi Yehuda ben Teima defines as the age of *etziv* counsel, "50?" (See *Pirkai Avot* 5:25).

SHABAT SHALOM



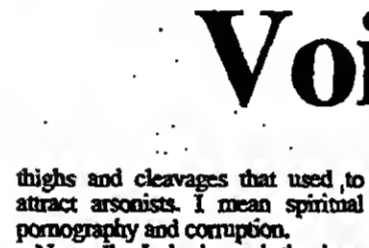
By SHLOMO RISKIN

These are the accounts of the Sanctuary, the Sanctuary of the Testimony, as they were counted according to the commandment of Moses, for the work of the Levites by the hand of Itamar the son of Aaron the priest. (Ex. 38:21)

On Jewish Catholicism

have been coated with limestone walls and the areas between them are sprinkled with carousels, seesaws, swings and slides. Not that this face-lift has made the place more aesthetic - the gardenless buildings are still stained with rust, drowning in weeds, and wrapped in hanging laundry - but it is a bit more amicable.

VOICE OF THE TOTOLOTTO



By ARYEH ZEIF

A second poster in that series shows a smiling young Israeli woman, decked out in Indian fashion, in the lotus position, musing: "There's nothing like India - the flavors, the aromas, the people, the beaches. But like it or not, now I'm here, waiting evenings and in the morning dreaming of a house of my own with two horses on the grounds (plus a husband who won't be jealous of them). Oh, for the Mifal Hapayis grand prize!"

Beginning with commitment

and the two stone tablets the marriage contract, then in effect the Israelites commit adultery with their worship of the golden calf. Were God only a God of justice, this would be the end of the Jewish people, the sin mandating eternal divorce. But since God is also a God of compassion, He forgives.

(last week), speaking of the obligation of every Jew to give a half-shekel to the Sanctuary. This represents an act of commitment, of pledge, of a covenantal relationship between God and Israel 4,000 years strong, demonstrated in our daily lives by the giving of our "half-shekels" to build our Torah academies, synagogues and outreach centers. Interestingly enough, financial commitment is also the traditional halachic form of betrothal; one may not profess love without understanding that financial responsibility is built into the marital relationship.

proceeds Purim because back in Shusan there were two threats: Shuman-Amslek-antemite from without, and a nation steeped in the amnesia of assimilation from within. After we remember the dangers of religious laxity and intermarriage, the next special Sabbath suggests the possibility of purification. We read of the red heifer, *para aduma*, whose healing ashes-with-water have the ability to purify even from death itself.

Dry Bones comic strip panels. Panel 1: THE AIDS PLAGUE, GENOCIDE IN AFRICA, GLOBAL WARMING, THE CRUSHING OF TIBET, PERSECUTION OF COPTS IN EGYPT, THE EXPLOSIVE SITUATION IN ALBANIA... Panel 2: THE NUCLEAR THREAT OF CRUMBLING REACTORS IN RUSSIA, THE HOLE IN THE OZONE AND THE POSSIBLE SPREAD OF MAD COW DISEASE TO AMERICA... Panel 3: WILL ALL HAVE TO TAKE A BACK SEAT! Panel 4: THE JEWS ARE BUILDING HOMES IN JERUSALEM. (Speech bubbles: SHOCKING! GASP! GOOD LORD!)

FUNDS



By BEVERLEE BLACK

The problems of poverty are easily and often overlooked. It is easy to avert eyes when passing beggars on the streets. It is easier still to ignore poverty that flourishes beyond the tunnel vision of our unaffected lives. Fortunately, most of our readers are not directly affected by poverty and all its hideous pains. It is easy to overlook and yet the fact is, according to the government and voluntary bodies, more and more Israelis, particularly those with large families, are being pushed further and further down.

It's too easy to ignore poverty

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TASE ROUNDUP Shares fall as investors wait for CPI report

Mishtanim 246.64 ▼ 1.13% Maof 253.24 ▼ 1.05%

By ROBERT DANIEL Stock investors will base investment decisions in coming days partly on today's consumer price index report, which will give them a clue to whether the central bank will cut interest rates.

WORLD MARKET ROUNDUP German shares lead European bourses into retreat

LONDON (Reuters) - European stocks and bond markets went into retreat yesterday after investors sold Wall Street down and inflation worries injected fresh nervousness into US Treasuries.

STOCKS PLUNGE ON INFLATION FEARS

NEW YORK (AP) - Stocks tumbled yesterday, dragging the Dow Jones industrial average toward its fourth biggest point drop ever, as inflation fears sent interest rates shooting to their highest level in nearly six months.

TELEVISION SHARES DATA SUPPLIED BY PACIFIC MEDITERRANEAN INVESTMENTS

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WEIZMAN Continued from Page 1

Weizman thanked him for the telephone call and noted that the peace process had already "gone a long way." He expressed the hope that it would be possible to put it back on track.

Jordan's King Hussein telephoned Weizman from Spain to express his shock and condolences.

"I feel as if those pupils who were our guests on Jordanian soil were my own children," Hussein told Weizman, adding that he would do his utmost to reduce the current tensions between Jordan and Israel.

King Hussein and Prince Hassan who spoke with me and, I believe, with the prime minister, understand that the process must go on and are even fearful that it might stop.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak yesterday faxed Weizman to convey his "condolences to the families of the victims and the Israeli people."

our earnest and sincere hope that efforts will be doubled in the days ahead to create a better atmosphere in our region, and eliminate causes of tension and violence.

After last night's meeting between Weizman and Netanyahu, an official, describing Weizman's current role, commented "One person cannot push forward the peace process alone. With the president, the prime minister has someone he can talk to."

The Tel Aviv Stock Exchange data were unavailable due to technical difficulties.

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**Bach retires**  
The Supreme Court bids farewell to Justice Gavriel Bach (second from left) who turned 70 yesterday and retired. (Brian Hender)

# Appeal against PT mayor's acquittal denied

The Supreme Court yesterday rejected the state's appeal against the acquittal of Petah Tikva Mayor Giora Lev, who had been charged with bribery and breach of trust. The court criticized his actions, but ruled that they were not criminal.

According to the charge sheet, Lev promoted contractor Mordechai Dinovitz's interests in Petah Tikva and, in return, Dinovitz arranged funding for Lev's wife to travel to the US.

Dinovitz helped Lev set up a development fund for Petah Tikva and introduced him to potential contributors, including Riki Heinitz, an Israeli who was living in Tel Aviv.

In August 1990, Lev was scheduled to travel to Los Angeles to meet with potential contributors. Shortly after Lev told Dinovitz that he would be traveling alone, Heinitz sent Lev a ticket for his

wife. At the same time, Petah Tikva signed a contract for Dloovitz to construct a park there.

The Tel Aviv District Court acquitted Lev in May 1994, noting that it is common practice and sometimes even required for public figures to travel with their spouses. The state appealed this decision.

Justices Aharon Barak, Gavriel Bach and Eliezer Goldberg denied the appeal. The contract with Dinovitz was carried out appropriately and benefited Petah Tikva, Bach noted.

The Local Council Authority released a statement yesterday congratulating Lev on his acquittal. (Tum)

**WEATHER**

Haifa 10-17  
Tiberias 10-18  
Afula 8-17  
Samaria 8-18  
Tel Aviv 11-17  
Jerusalem 8-12  
Beer Sheva 10-18  
Dead Sea 12-24  
Eilat 12-24

Forecast: Rain in the northern and central regions.  
Shabbat: Fairly, drop in temperatures.

# Bar-On investigation near end

**By RAINE MARCUS**

At the end of the seventh week of the police investigation into the Bar-On for Hebron Affair, five key figures were summoned for questioning at the Jaffa branch of the National Police Headquarters yesterday.

Director-General of the Prime Minister's Office Avigdor Lieberman, Shas MK Aryeh Deri, businessman David Appel and attorney Roni Bar-On all were questioned. Deri's advisor,

Yehuda Avidan, was summoned to give evidence for the first time. He called the allegations "total nonsense."

Yesterday's questioning was an attempt by police to wrap up the investigation, sparked off by Channel 1's broadcast that Bar-On's was appointed attorney-general as part of a deal in which Deri allegedly told the Prime Minister's Office that Shas would support the Hebron redeployment in return for Bar-On's appointment. The Channel 1 report also

said that Bar-On was chosen, not only for his Likud affiliations, but also because he agreed to arrange some sort of plea bargain in Deri's ongoing criminal trial.

Police are supposed to complete their investigation next week, and the state attorney is expected to decide if there is

room to warrant criminal indictments against MKs, ministers and others involved. So far it is not clear if any of those questioned will be charged on criminal counts or whether the whole case was simply a political conspiracy, indicating improper government and "wheeling and dealing" but not criminal offenses.

Police and the State Attorney's Office also will rule whether Channel 1's report was truthful. Police believe they know who leaked the report to Channel 1

reporter Ayala Hasson, but have not investigated in full the reason behind the leak, which, sources said, "was far from proper."

Lieberman was questioned yesterday, as were Deri, Bar-On and Appel. The latter two already had been questioned this past week. Sources said that police, in the final stages of their probe, now are comparing all four's versions of events to examine if there are contradictions.

Justice Minister Tzahi Hanegbi is to be questioned next week.

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Berlin	08	43	11	02	cloudy	
Buenos Aires	19	86	28	82	partly cloudy	
Calcutta	00	32	04	38	rain	
Chicago	02	38	03	39	clear	
Copenhagen	06	43	17	07	clear	
Frankfurt	06	43	17	07	clear	
Geneva	01	2	4	4	cloudy	
Helsinki	01	2	4	4	cloudy	
Hong Kong	21	70	25	77	clear	
London	14	57	20	70	clear	
Los Angeles	08	48	12	54	clear	
Madrid	10	50	17	53	clear	
Manila	06	43	21	70	clear	
Montreal	-16	03	27	07	45	clear
Moscow	02	38	03	39	clear	
New York	-03	27	07	45	clear	
Paris	06	43	17	07	clear	
Perth	04	39	17	53	clear	
Rome	02	38	03	39	clear	
Stockholm	02	38	03	39	clear	
Sydney	20	68	25	77	clear	
Tokyo	08	48	12	54	clear	
Toronto	-10	14	14	57	clear	
Vienna	04	39	17	53	clear	
Zurich	04	39	17	53	clear	

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